

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-14 SCS-03 SCA-01 EUR-25 L-03 SS-20

NSC-07 SCCT-02 USSS-00 H-03 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 INRE-00 DRC-01 /110 W

----- 034177

O 051235Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8731

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 2052

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CASC, ET, SU

SUBJ: TENNECO FOUR

REF: BEIRUT 10641

1. EMBASSY ASSUMES THAT A CLEAR CUT UNDERSTANDING EXISTS BETWEEN TENNECO AND THE ELF WHEREBY ELF CONDITONS HAVE BEEN MET AND THE ELF HAS AGREED TO RELEASE PRISONERS. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE ON THIS END THAT SUCH IS NOT THE CASE.

2. SUDANESE AUTHORITIES WERE CAREFULLY QUERIED FOR THEIR ESTIMATE AFTER RECEIPT OF REFTEL. KHALIFA IS ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED ZEIN IS WORKING IN GOOD FAITH TO EVACUATE THE TENNECO HOSTAGES FROM ERITREA. KHALIFA CONFIRMS THAT THERE ARE HEAVY RAINS IN THE AREA AND THAT HIS WOULD INDEED IMPEDE TRAVEL IN THE AREAS THE TENNECO HOSTAGES WOULD HAVE TO TRAVERSE.

3. KHALIFA ADDED A NEW FACTOR WHEN HE STATED THAT ZEIN INDICATED TWO OF THE CAPTIVES ARE NOT YOUNG AND CANNOT MAINTAIN THE PACE SET BY THE CAPTORS. HE ADDED HOWEVER THAT THEY ARE IN GOOD HEALTH.

4. MAHAMOUD HAS JUST CONTACTED BOGAN AND GRAHAM AND INDICATED HE SAW NO REASON FOR BOGAN'S APPREHENSIONS AT
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THE DELAY AND WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT RELEASE WAS IMMINENT

IN THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS.

5. WE REMIND ADDRESSES THAT WETHERFORD'S RELEASE FOLLOWED THE SAME PATTERN OF A SERIES OF ESTIMATED TIMETABLES THAT NEVER MATERIALIZED UNTIL THE FINAL RELEASE WAS CONSUMMATED. THAT EXPERIENCE AND THE PACE OF PRESENT EVENTS SHOWS A PRIMITIVE ELF COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM AND THE FACT THAT THE ELF MOVES WITH GREAT CARE AND CAUTION IN ERITREA. WE CAN SPECULATE ABOUT POSSIBLE MISSED SIGNALS BETWEEN ELF PERSONNEL AND A VARIETY OF OTHER FACTORS CAUSING THE DELAYS BUT BASED ON FACTS AVAILABLE TO US WE HAVE TO ASSUME THAT EVENTS ARE MOVING SLOWLY TOWARD RELEASE. BASED ON WETHERFORD'S OBSERVATIONS AND INFORMED SUDANESE SOURCES THIS PACE APPEARS PAR FOR THE COURSE IN ERITREA.
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Message Attributes

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